CATS Newsletter

The Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group

Vol. 12 No. 9 - 10
Jan — Feb 1995

Using Your Eyes and your VDT

by
The American Optometric Association.

(Ruth sent a different version of this information to the newsletter a year ago, but it has disappeared somewhere - you just can't get good help these days.)
[As I work with a Developmental Optometrist on just such problems, The following article "comes from the heart."]

It's 11:30 in the morning. You've been working at your video display terminal (VDT) since 9:00 AM. Your eyes feel irritated and fatigued, your vision is blurry and you still have several hours of work ahead of you.

The symptoms that you are experiencing are common among people who work with VDTs. They may be the result of the way that you use the equipment and furnishings in your workstation. But they may be, at least partly, the result of a vision problem.

Anytime you experience symptoms like headaches, eye strain, blurred vision, eye irritation, double vision, excessive tears or dry eyes, pain in the eyes or excessive blinking or squinting, you should visit you doctor of optometry for a comprehensive eye examination. And, when you do, be sure to tell the doctor about the VDT work that you do. He may prescribe "computer glasses" - reading glasses optimized for the distance betwen your eyes and your VDT.

In addition to a comprehensive eye examination, there are a number of things that you can do to arrange and use the elements of your workstation to eliminate or minimize discomfort.

Continued on page 2...

CATS to Get on Internet: "Real Soon Now"

by
Mark Fisher

CATS is going on the Internet! That was the tentative decision taken at the November meeting. Taking advantage of their absence, Herb Schaaf and Sarah Fisher were appointed as the investigative committee to look into implementation of this forward looking plan.

Continued on page 4

A Word from the Editor:

The CATS Post Office Box is being allowed to lapse. The new address is:

CATS Newsletter
7044 Cindy Lane
Annandale VA 22003

February will be Paste-up Month. Bring the articles you'd like to see in the newsletter and help put them in!

... from p. 1

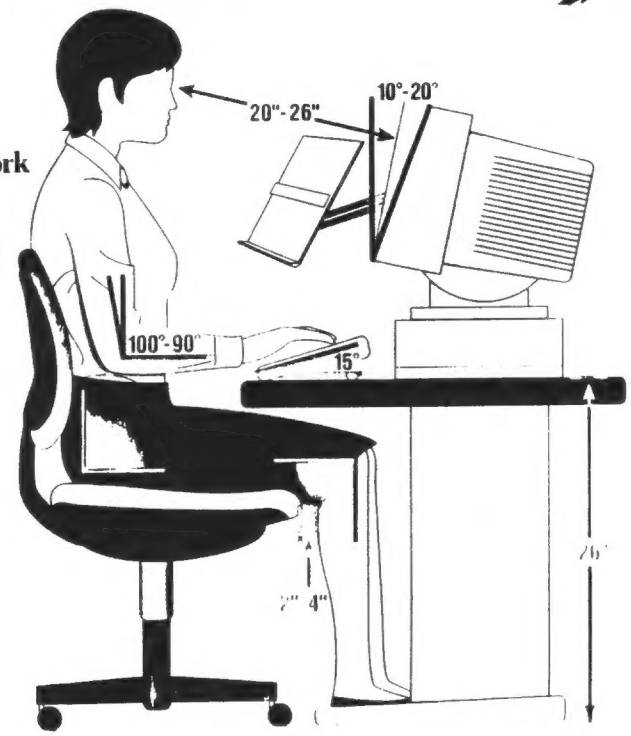
Adjusting Your Chair

Manytimes, your chair can be adjusted to make your work station more efficient and comfortable. For instance:

- Your feet should be flat on the floor (or on a slightly angled foot rest) with your knees bent near or greater than 90 degrees.
- Your seat should support your legs without excessive pressure on the backl of your thighs.
- Your back should be snug against the seat to fit your spinal column
- The distance from the front of your chair to the hollow of your knee should be 2" to 4" inches.
- Your wrist and hand should extend nearly straight from the elbow to the home row of the keyboard

Setting up your work surface

Consider the following suggestions to make sure the height of you work surface and the amount of leg room it provides are comfortable.



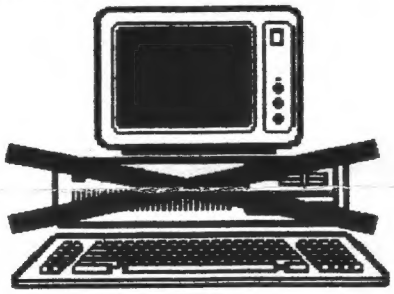
Is your work station properly arranged?

- For most people, the amount of leg room below the work surface should be about 25" high by 27" wide by 27" deep. Larger people will require more space.
- A commonly preferred work surface height for VDT use is about 26" as opposed to a conventional 29" of most tables or desks.

Using your VDT and keyboard

The Following suggestions will help you arrange your VDT screen and your keyboard to allow you to work most productively and comfortably:

- Locate your VDT from 16" to 30" from you eyes, depending on the size of your VDT and your individual vision conditions. Many people find 20" to 26" most comfortable.



- The top of the VDT should be slightly below a horizontal eye level. [I would professionally recommend 30° below eye level - similar to the aspect of a book when read. In the case of IBM machines, this means NOT stacking your monitor on the CPU. MF]

- Tilt the top of the VDT away from you at a 10° to 20° angle.
- Place document holders close to your screen within the same viewing distance. Keep your keyboard and VDT in line.
- Keep your VDT screen free of fingerprints and dust. Both can reduce clarity.
- Adjust your keyboard so it tilts toward you at a 15° angle

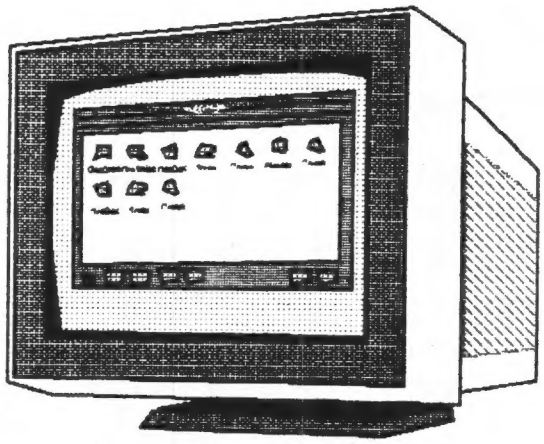
VDTs and lighting

To improve visual efficiency when using your VDT:

- Try to match the brightness of the surroundings to that of the VDT screen. overall room light should be about 20 to 70 foot candles, which is about half the level of normal office light.
- The contrast between the characters on the VDT screen and the screen background should be high. [However, in the case of IBM color CGA monitors, brightness and contrast controls should be carefully adjusted for maximum clarity. MF]
- Minimize reflected glare on your VDT screen by using window treatments, dimmer switches on lights and anti-glare screens
- Position your VDT screen perpendicular to windows or other bright light sources to reduce the likelihood of glare. To locate the source of glare, hold a small mirror on your VDT screen. The reflection will help you determine the origin of the glare.

Working efficiently

Human eyes were made for most efficient operation at a distance, but if you use the suggestions made here and those made by your Optometrist, you will be able to use your VDT more comfortably and productively.



Coming events:

February 1) March - April Newsletter **paste-up. Bring articles!** Any format, any media! 2) ...?

MINUTES - MEETING 12 NOVEMBER 1994

Eleven loyal CATS members gathered at the usual place for another "free-form" (i.e. no formal agenda) session. They were (in alphanumeric order) Barry, Bob, Chris, Cliff, Duane, George, Herb, Joe, Mannie, Mark, and Ruth. At least five QLs were available, but only four were running.

Duane took the chair and our treasurer reported that we're still solvent and that two renewals had come in since last meeting.

Editor reminded all that the next publication is slated for January and that the N/L paste-up will occur at the December meeting.

Joe informed that the Library reservation scheme has been changed and that the authorities will advise us of the schedule granted us, but we don't know when that will occur. As a consequence, the yearly schedule MAY not be available for the January issue and the word may have to be spread via BBS and phone-tree. Also, if our small room is sometimes not available for our use, Joe has been

Continued on p. 4

Continued from page 1:

Anticipated benefits would include:

- **Improved**, local area access for all members.
- **More** reliable service, with e-mail and file archiving (probably through Maryland's "public utility" internet connection, SAILOR).
- **Easier** file up- and down-loads (known on the internet as FTPing ((File Transfer Protocol)).

Upon returning home from the meeting, I told my wife or her new appointment. We talked a little about internet connectivity, and she had a few other bits of information that we didn't cover:

- **The** basic forum of discussion on the internet is the discussion list. These can only be created by the SYSOP of an internet node, such as SAILOR or CAP-ACCESS.
- **Overall** tele-comm costs would increase. Current costs are ≈$108/yr for the BBS phone line. "Full" Internet operation would require separate e-mail accounts for each member, at $10 to $30 per month, and some form of persuasion to get a local SYSOP to support a CATS discussion group.
- **There** are three levels of access to the Internet through SAILOR: 1) Free access through local, dial-up lines to various directories and public access information through a system known as Gopher. 2) $32/year e-mail access, with 1 megabyte of storage for ASCII messages only. 3) ≈$100/yr FTP access.

What to do? I can think of three options - there may be more:

- **Schmooze** or otherwise persuade the SYSOP at either SAILOR or CAP-ACCESS to host a List-Serve and Archive site.
- **Sign** CATS up as a person on SAILOR, give members the password (Vernon?), and let members look through the message base of posted messages. This could be done at either the e-mail or FTP level. It seems like there must be some potential for abuse here, but I can't think of what might happen.
- **Find** another QL or Sinclair discussion list and Archive site already in existence, and piggyback on that. Tim Swenson may know of such a location.

T-iii-mmm!!

... from p. 3

authorized to request the large room(unless the rate goes sky-high). Foreign members (those from Baltimore and points North area) will look into scheduling an occasional meeting on their turf as we have sometimes done in the past.

Bulletin Board SYSOP, pointing out that our board doesn't get a tremendous amount of use, wondered whether we might not be better off to get a place in/on INTERNET via the Library system in Baltimore. Access to 1 MB of space and and address which would permit messaging via E-Mail would cost $35/year. For $100/yr., would get us 2MB, the address, and ability to download stuff from all over. Our telephone bill on the BBS is greater than that as of now. Herb "volunteered" to research the idea.

A motion was approved for the acquisition of a 3.5 inch disk drive for the Club computer as this has been a bottleneck in the past when folks want to copy disks of different formats. One member, who shall be nameless because I don't remember, will pick up one at a forthcoming computer fest/show at the most reasonable price he can find <35. Mannie donated a TK2 Ver.2.13 ROM to the Club to eliminate the need to read the toolkit from disk. Everyone concurred in closing the business meeting.

What is Sailor?

Sailor is a computer network of Maryland's libraries that allows access to scores of public databases as well as to the Internet, the world's network of networks. You'll find answers to questions, help with homework assignments, and just have fun exploring.

By June 1995, most Maryland public library systems and many schools and colleges will make Sailor available to people who come to the library. Ask your local librarian when you will be able to use Sailor at your library.

With the equipment described below, you can have 24 hour access to Sailor from the comfort of your home or office. For the price of a local phone call you can connect with thousands of computer systems, library catalogs and other resources around the globe.

Ports of Call

- ❑ Maryland online library catalogs
- ❑ Access to Internet, the world's "network of networks"
- ❑ Selection of books
- ❑ Dictionaries and other factual resources
- ❑ Community information
- ❑ Directories of state and local government
- ❑ Federal government information, such as:
  - Federal Register
  - Cancer Net
  - NASA Space Link
- ❑ You can also leave questions and comments in the feedback section on the main menu. If you leave an e-mail address or daytime phone number, someone will contact you.

Setting Sail — From Your Home, Office, School or Library

What you need at your home, office, or school:

- ❑ A modem-equipped PC, MAC or terminal at home or at work.
- ❑ Communications software like ProComm® Crosstalk® Q-Modem® or Terminal® (for Windows)
- ❑ Phone line

If you have Internet telnet capability, you can telnet directly to Sailor using one of these addresses: 192.188.199.5 or sailor.lib.md.us

What you need at your library:

Some libraries offer access to Sailor on selected terminals or PC's. Ask your librarian or school media specialist what access is available in your library and what special instructions you need to set sail.

What you do:

A. Set your communication software and modem to the following specifications (chances are, they are already set this way):
- ❑ Full duplex or echo off
- ❑ 8 data bits, no parity, 1 stopbit
- ❑ 1200, 2400, 9600, or 14,400 baud
- ❑ Terminal emulation: vt100 or vt102

B. Dial: **392-0909**

C. Respond to menu choices by typing the number of your choice and pressing "enter":
1. CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
2. SAILOR:
   - ❑ At login prompt, type **gopher** and press enter.
   - ❑ At password prompt, press enter.

D. For best results, read the helpful hints and introductions. Pay attention to "exit" information and command lines.

Navigating with Sailor

While navigating through Sailor you will use a menu system called a Gopher. Although there are many Gophers in the Internet, the helpful punctuation and most of the commands are consistent. The following tips may help you avoid stormy weather:

COMMANDS

u	Go back one menu
m	Go back to main menu
spacebar	Go to next screen/page
b	Go back one screen/page
q	Quit out of Sailor

PUNCTUATION AT END OF MENU LINES

/	Item is another menu
.	Item is a text file to read
<?>	Item is searchable by keyword
<TEL>	Item will telnet you to another computer

Storm Warnings

- ❑ Some Internet destinations may be busy. You may get messages like "too many users; try later."
- ❑ Be a cautious information consumer. Information resources on the Internet are not necessarily current, accurate or factual!

S.O.S.

For additional help about connecting to Sailor, call the Sailor Help Desk at :

410-396-INFO
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM weekdays

Or e-mail message to:

helpdesk@epfl1.epflbalto.org

THE CAPITAL AREA TIMEX/ SINCLAIR USERS GROUP is a not-for-profit group serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Timex/Sinclair family of computers.

Officers:

Chairman	Monthly position
Vice-Chairman	Monthly position
Recording Secretary	Monthly position
Corresponding Secretary	Joe Miller
Treasurer	Barry Washington
Newsletter Editor	Mark Fisher

(301) 589-7407
(301) 588-0579 BBS

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held from 12:00 M to 4:30 PM on the second Saturday of each month at the New Carrolton Library.

Newsletter

User Group memberships cost $10.00 per year, are good for 12 months and include all priveleges (access to software libraries, group buys, etc.).

Mail dues to:

LeBaron (Barry) Washington
7044 Cindy Lane
Annandale VA 22003

Networks

internet: send article submissions (short or long) to "sfisher@capcon.net".

Timex SIG on Compuserve: Wednesday night 10:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (GO CLUB)

CATS BBS: (301) 588-0579, 8-N-1. 300/1200/2400 baud. Message base and files for members, 24 hours a day, no time limits.

CATS Newsletter
7044 Cindy Lane
Annandale VA 22003

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The next two meetings of CATS will be held on: January 14, 1995
and ... February 11, 1994 (Paste up for Mar-Apr)
12:00 M Hardware workshop
2:00 PM General meeting

At: New Carrollton Public Library

If you are not a member of CATS, this is the only issue you will recieve.